



City of Santa Barbara  
Planning Division

## A GUIDE TO THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Community Development  
630 Garden Street  
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One of the intents of this document is to set out guidelines by which City Planning staff can review your project. If your project meets certain provisions of these Guidelines, then no ABR, Planning Commission or environmental review will be required. If you have questions about the design review process or these Guidelines, please contact Planning Staff. They will be happy to help you. Please note that Hillside Housing refers to housing within the Hillside Design District; Infill Housing refers to housing in areas outside the Hillside Design District.

### DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR SINGLE FAMILY AND ONE-STORY DUPLEX PROJECTS

#### *(N.P.O. Checklist)*

Answer these questions in sequence; you may not need to answer every question to find out if your project requires design review if you follow the directions.

- PLEASE NOTE:
- \* If your project consists solely of alterations to existing structures with no new square footage, use the existing site square footage when the checklist asks for new or additional square footage.
  - \* Square footage totals are calculated by including the square footage of all stories of all structures including parking garages, carports and any other accessory structures as defined in Title 28 of the Zoning Ordinance.
  - \* Grading calculations are determined by adding the amounts of cut and fill. This includes any excavation required for swimming pools.

Yes/No

☐ ☐ **1. Is your property in the City?**

If "yes", go to question 2.

If "no", go to the appropriate jurisdictional office.

☐ ☐ **2. Is your property in either the El Pueblo Viejo (Part I or II) or Brinkerhoff Avenue Landmark District?** (Map available at Planning Counter, 630 Garden Street.)

If "yes", submit an application for Historic Landmarks Commission review and go to question 14 to determine whether Planning Commission review is also required.

If "no", go to question 3.

- ☐ ☐ **3. Is your project in the Mission Area Special Design District?** (Map available at Planning Counter, 630 Garden Street.)

If "yes", submit an application for ABR review and go to question 14 to determine whether Planning Commission review is also required.

If "no", go to question 4.

- ☐ ☐ **4. Is your project in the Hillside Design District?** (Map available in Single Family Residence Design Guidelines, pages H-2 through H-5)

If "yes", go to question 5.

If "no", go to question 7.

- ☐ ☐ **5. Is the average slope of your property; OR the average slope of your building and grading site 20% or greater?**

If "yes", submit an application for ABR review and go to question 15 to determine whether Planning Commission review is also required.

If "no", go to question 6.

- ☐ ☐ **6. Is the total amount of grading proposed (cut plus fill), excluding grading under the main building footprint, greater than 250 cubic yards?**

If "yes", submit an application for ABR review and go to question 15 to determine whether Planning Commission review is also required.

If "no", go to question 7.

- ☐ ☐ **7. Is the total square footage (all floors and stories of all new structures, additions plus existing structures) on the site greater than 4,000 square feet? If no new or additional square footage is proposed, is the total existing square footage on the site greater than 4,000 square feet?**

If "yes", go to question 12.

If "no", go to question 8.

- ☐ ☐ **8. Is the total square footage (all floors and stories of all new structures, additions plus existing structures) on the site greater than 35% of the lot area? If no new or additional square footage is proposed, is the total existing square footage on the site greater than 35% of the lot area?**

If "yes", go to question 11.

If "no", go to question 9. However, if "no" and the site is vacant, ABR review is not required; prepare working plans and submit to the Building & Safety Division for a building permit.

- ☐ ☐ **9. Does your project consist solely of alterations with no new square footage?**

If "yes", ABR review is not required; prepare working plans and submit to the Building & Safety Division for a building permit.

If "no", go to question 10.

- ☐ ☐ **10. Does the project meet ONE OR MORE of the following criteria?**

Yes/No

- ☐ ☐ a. If you are adding square footage to existing structure(s), will the addition(s) exceed 50% of the total existing square footage of all structures that existed on the site as of July 1, 1992?
- ☐ ☐ b. If the project includes reconstruction, will the total square footage exceed 50% of the total existing square footage of all structures that existed on the site?

If you answered "yes" to items a. and/or b., go to question 11.

If you answered "no" to items a. and b., ABR review is not required; prepare working plans and submit to the Building & Safety Division for a building permit.

- ☐ ☐ **11. Is the total square footage of the new structure(s) or addition(s) plus existing structures (if any) on the site greater than 2,500 square feet? If the site is vacant, is the total square footage of the new structures on the site greater than 2,500 square feet?**

If "yes", go to question 12.

If "no", ABR review is not required; prepare working plans and submit to the Building & Safety Division for a building permit.

- ☐ ☐ **12. Is the height of all new structure(s) and addition(s) greater than 17 feet from natural grade to the roof line? If only alterations are proposed, will the alterations increase the height of the structures to 17 feet or greater from natural grade to the roof line?**

If "yes", go to question 13.

If "no", go to question 14 to determine whether ABR and Planning Commission review is required.

Yes/No

☐ ☐ **13. Do(es) the new structure(s) or addition(s) meet ONE OR MORE of the following criteria?**

Yes/No

- ☐ ☐ a. A coastal development permit or zoning modifications will be needed in order to build the structure(s) or the addition(s).
- ☐ ☐ b. The project will not be designed in a single architectural style. (In determining single architectural style, the following elements shall be taken into consideration: roof pitch and materials, window and door style and materials, window proportions and exterior colors and materials.)
- ☐ ☐ c. Less than seventy five percent (75%) of the length of each exterior wall of the second story on a new main structure(s) or an addition(s) to an existing main structure(s) will be set back a minimum of one and one-half times the required interior yard setback not including uncovered decks or balconies, for all interior yards. Rear yards in the R-3 and R-4 zones are excluded. (See illustration, page 13)
- ☐ ☐ d. The new structure(s) or addition(s) will exceed 25 feet in height above natural grade at any point, exclusive of architectural elements such as chimneys, vents, antennae and towers that do not add floor area to the building. All portions of the roof are included in the building height.
- ☐ ☐ e. A portion of the structure will cantilever beyond the face of the structure below by more than four feet (4').
- ☐ ☐ f. At least one of the proposed site retaining walls will either:  
i) be forty-two inches (42") or greater in height; OR  
ii) not exceed six feet (6') in height, will not be faced with sandstone, fieldstone, slumpstone, adobe or similar natural materials and the total length of all retaining walls on the site, not including those that are part of buildings, will exceed 150 feet in length.
- ☐ ☐ g. The total grading proposed (cut and fill), excluding grading under the building footprint, will exceed 250 cubic yards.
- ☐ ☐ h. A specimen tree, skyline tree, designated Historic or Landmark tree, or oak tree with a diameter of four inches (4") or more at four feet (4') above natural grade, will be removed.

If you answered "yes" to one or more items a. through h. (including one option under f.), submit an application for ABR review and go to question 14 to determine whether Planning Commission review is also required.

If you answered "no" to a. through h. (including both options under f.), go to question 14 to determine whether Planning Commission review is required.

## PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Yes /No

- ☐ ☐ **14. Is any portion of your project site in the Hillside Design District?**

If "yes", go to question 15.

If "no", Planning Commission review is not required. However, design review is required if you answered "yes" to questions 2, 3, 5, 6, or 13.

- ☐ ☐ **15. Is the total combined square footage of the new structure(s) or addition(s) plus existing structure(s) (if any) on the site greater than 6,500 square feet?**

If "yes", submit an application for Planning Commission review with your application for design review.

If "no", go to question 16.

- ☐ ☐ **16. Is the amount of grading greater than 500 cubic yards of cut and fill, excluding grading necessary for the building foundation of the main building(s)?**

If "yes", submit an application for Planning Commission review with your application for design review.

If "no", Planning Commission review is not required. However, design review is required if you answered "yes" to questions 2, 3, 5, 6, or 13.

**Note:** If the ABR/HLC determine that a project is proposed for a site which is highly visible to the public, the Board or Commission may, prior to taking final action on the application, require presentation of the application to the Planning Commission for its comments. Therefore, you will be required to submit an application for Planning Commission review.

**Note:** If, during ABR/HLC Concept Review, it is determined that an Environmental Impact Report is required, it will be necessary for you to submit an application for Planning Commission review.